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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 000073

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA FOR BURNS/SATTERFIELD/DIBBLE;  
NEA/SA/EX FOR RICHIE; DEPT FOR DS/IP/ITA; DEPT FOR  
DS/IP/NEA;  
DRL FOR A/S CRANER; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DANIN;  
USAID FOR DCHA, DCHA/FPP, PRM FOR DEWEY/GREENE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWBG PHUM PREL PTER ASEC CASC GZ IS](#)  
SUBJECT: WB/G SITREP: EIGHT ARRESTED IN WEST BANK; IN GAZA,  
EIGHT PERSONS KILLED AND 19-20 PERSONS INJURED : JANUARY,  
5, 2004 (1500 HOURS LOCAL)

This is a joint ConGen Jerusalem/Embassy Tel Aviv cable.

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Violence continued in Gaza January 4-5 with 11-12 IDF soldiers reportedly injured by Qassam rocket attacks and eight Palestinians, including six members of the same family and one militant, killed by Israeli gunfire. In the West Bank, eight Palestinians were arrested, including a PIJ activist. End Summary.

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West Bank  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) ATTACKS/SECURITY:

-- Deaths: Nil.

-- Injuries: Nil.

-- Arrests: The IDF arrested PIJ activist Bilal Yasin near Jenin on January 4, according to Palestinian sources. Yasin escaped from an Israeli jail near Ramallah two years ago.

-- Arrests: The IDF arrested seven other Palestinians on security charges on January 4, according to Palestinian sources.

-- Possible Kidnapping: The IDF set up roadblocks around Ma'aleh Adumim after Palestinian sources said two IDF soldiers were kidnapped, according to Israeli media. The IDF later said that they doubted the reports were true.

[1](#)3. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- PA Foreign Minister Nabil Sha'ath said January 4 that Fatah leaders had recently offered Hamas a meeting to discuss stopping rocket launches from Gaza, but that Hamas has refused the request.

-- Abu Mazen campaigned in Hebron January 5 and plans to do so in Nablus on January 6, and Bethlehem, during the January 7 Orthodox Christmas, according to Palestinian sources.

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Gaza  
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[1](#)4. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Israeli media reported that seven Palestinians were killed January 4, including six members of one family by an IDF tank shell in Bayt Lahia (see "injuries").

-- Death: Israeli troops killed one Palestinian militant January 5 near the Erez Crossing between Israel and Gaza after he reportedly fired at IDF troops patrolling in the area.

-- Injuries: Israeli media reported that eight Palestinians were injured in Bayt Lahia on January 4 by an IDF tank shell (see "deaths").

-- Injuries: According to Israeli news sources, 11-12 Israeli soldiers were injured by Qassam rockets fired near the Gaza-Israel border on January 5.

-- Shootings: According to the IDF, there were seven shooting incidents January 4-5 in Nisanit, near Rafah, at the Karni crossing, Netzarim and in Rafiah.

-- Explosions: The IDF reported that it found an explosive device in Rafah on January 4, which did not detonate. Israeli troops also reportedly discovered another explosive

device and several hand grenades overnight near the Erez Crossing. At least one device exploded overnight January 4-5.

15. (SBU) INCURSIONS/DEMOLITIONS: UNRWA reported that on January 5, Israeli tanks and bulldozers entered the coastal road in Northern Gaza and are reportedly bulldozing the area around the Palestinian checkpoint at Erez.

16. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS:

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was open January 5, with a major detour at Netzarim Junction.

-- Erez Crossing was closed for both internationals and for Palestinians January 5.

-- The Erez Industrial Zone remained closed January 5.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinian laborers January 5, but was open for the import of aggregates used in construction.

-- Karni Terminal was open, but reportedly operating slowly January 5.

-- Rafah Terminal was closed for arrivals and departures January 5.

-- Tel al-Sultan checkpoint was closed January 5. Toufah checkpoint was closed for residents of al-Mowassi.

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